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PEACE.

WE are as wanderers on the pebbly shore,
Beside the margin of an unknown sea
Horizonless in haze of mystery,
Whose waves come lapping as they lapped before
We watched their motion,—now as evermore
Recurrent in their calm persistency.
No ocean laughter, but serenity
That hushes all vain wishes to explore
The silent spaces of the far-off deep.
All time, or long or short, forgetting there,
We look and listen only till we fill
Our eyes and ears with peace. Then if a sleep
Comes o'er our senses,—sleep,—nor greatly care ;
Feeling the unheard waves will murmur still.

March, 1872.

UNCERTAINTY.

IF of our seeming knowledge aught were sure,—
 If of the formless moods that hurry past
 We might seize only one and hold it fast ;
 (Were it of all the mood most cold and poor),
 It would be easy bravely to endure
 The sight of what our fate was at its worst.
 No tear from eye, nor wail from lip need burst.
 Our souls, possessed in patience, might inure
 Our lives to sober action. But our strength
 Is wasted in this long uncertainty.
 Our creeds elude our moods,—our moods our creeds,
 In ever-baffled chase, until at length
 We find that we have *spent* our energy,
 And that our toil hath small result in deeds.

March, 1872.

X X

TRUST.

TRUST—O thou whosoe'er for truth hast
sought,

With mind's toil and with long drawn-out unrest.

And sinkings of all hope that by thy quest

Thou mightst to any goal of peace be brought,

Or, ever learning, might'st some good be taught :

And bitter questionings if good be best,—

Or reckless pleasure—and all men for nought.

One day it may be thou shalt find faith's test

And trial season o'er. Then quietly,

Without the weary effort of the brain,

Thy heart's eyes shall the near-far things behold ;

And That thou couldst not find shall find out thee

Truth will not wait aloof for thee to attain.

But its great certitude shall thee enfold.

April, 1872.

PRAYER.

PRAYING to Thee our wills do not require
 That Thou, the Lord who doest all things well,
 Guiding thy world by laws immutable,
 Shouldst, when some wishes of our hearts' suspire
 Thee-ward in faith, grant unto the desire
 Of each man that which suits his own small need,
 (Lest others' wishes fail if *his* succeed,
 Being contrary) : but lower will to higher
 Can, in proud meekness and strong helplessness,
 Yield, and own Law as girdling Destiny.
 Thou, setting us within fixed bounds, didst give
 Great passive strength to human littleness—
 Only we cry to Thee for *sympathy* ;
 If Thou wilt *love* us, we can bear and live.

May, 1872.

FAITH'S GAIN.

TRULY our hearts are strangely fashioned :
 Strange mood is ours which follows long suspense
 'Twixt two beliefs, and agony intense
 To know if men and all their love be led,
 By passage forth among the things called dead,
 To death indeed,—or truest permanence :
 Just when our faint hope grows to confidence,
 A new sense comes that we could *now* instead
 Accept the hopeless creed without despair,
 Let go our certainties' most precious joys—
 Wherefore ? Is it that, tired, we cease to care
 For that our faith hath won in sorest strife ?
 Nay—but because a strength *no* creed destroys
 Grows in us through that wrestling for Heaven's life.

EYFE.

THINK you that he who in that far-off day,
 Whereto he reacheth through all days of life
 Of feeble labour and of passion's strife,
 Shall hear Christ's voice, what time that voice shall say
 The promised εὖγε,—and the crown shall lay
 Of that great guerdon-word upon his heart ;
 Would not forthwith in peace and strength depart,
 Hearing but that alone, and go his way
 Back to the same old toil or toil more stern ?
 What were Christ's "enter joy" without "well
 done !" ?
 Is not the first word better than the rest
 That follow after ?—Then if man's love yearn
 To give *all* gifts—and yet must give but *one*—
 Let it give εὖγε,—Christ's first gift and best.

May, 1872.

ΑΠΑΡΝΗΣΑΣΘΩ 'EAYTON.

WHEN Christ hath spoken to a human heart,
“ Take up thy cross—and follow after Me
Renouncing self,” (whether its will be free
 To yield up things possessed, or, harder part,
 It feel it hath no choice but take pain's smart
 All unassuaged by sense of power :) then he
 Whose will gives gladly or bears patiently
 Would from the thought of restitution start
 Grieved and indignant,—he who once hath poured
 His free-will or his patience forth, (and meant
 His gift should be accepted, though in worth
 It were so poor,)—*he* would not see restored
 Things he renounced in true abandonment ;
 Would not choose Heaven to give joys missed on earth.

May, 1872.

THE "HIGHER RULE."

SAY not that joy is lost for men whose fate,
 Or men whose calling by some voice of right,
 Is to forego for ever some delight
 Of earth's dear happiness—to watch and wait,
 Seeing unseen things' substance by a great
 Faith's evidence,—to walk by faith not sight—
 (Yea, find even faith fail almost, though not quite :)
 These are the souls elect to high estate.
 Unworthy they, yet counted through God's grace
 Worthy to share in the deep mystery
 Of Eucharistic joy that conquers pain.
 Therefore exultant let them take their place
 Where they may touch Christ's cross by sympathy,
 And in self-losing find life's truest gain.

Week before Easter, 1872.

THE MELANCHOLY OF GEORGE ELIOT.

STRENGTH won by conquest over strength is
 thine,

Thou woman who with resolute manly will,
 Hast wrestled down thy heart's desires until
 They owned thy stern creed's sway. Thou lett'st no
 sign

Of 'natural tears' bedim the steadfast shine
 Of thy Athene-soul's eyes : but with still
 Keen gaze of hopelessness confront'st all ill
 Of Destiny. From thee no brute-like whine
 Escapes—of terror, pain, or thirst for joy,
 Nor devil's irony. Thou dost remain
 Conscious of sad high human victory.
 What though no hope of retribution buoy
 Thy purpose above earthly fate,—one gain
 Of faith that right is right suffices thee.

July, 1872.

A SEPTEMBER MORNING.

IN presence of the furze and heather glow,
 And of the brightness that went everywhere,
 Mystic, intangible, throughout the air,
 I sat. And did that outer light bestow
 Some inward light on me? I only know
 That I beheld against the morning sky
 How the low hills rose strangely large and high,
 Transfigured in the glory of the show ;
 And Beauty seemed not hiding Truth, but true,
 Its substance filling all. (He found no place
 The Demon-Lie* that *No* to all things saith.)
 And I, believing, wrote glad words to you—
 (You heard them) how your calling by God's grace
 Was to a poet's work through life or death.

March, 1872.

* Mephistopheles, 'der Geist der stets verneint.'

COLOUR-MUSIC.

THERE is rich gladness in the fresh leaved trees,
 And in the daily-deepening grass of May,
 Wherein the music of the sunbeams' play
 Goes ringing on in infinite melodies,
 Not loud, but passing with a tender ease
 From the sweet primrose to the cowslip's tone
 On where from many-mingled flowers are thrown
 Joyous, confused, all colour harmonies.
 There is deep pleasure here wherein may lie
 Man's heart awhile to hear the loveliness,—
 Yet can this summer beauty wake no thrill
 Like his respondent rapture strange and high,
 When sunset clouds some bare moor's dreariness
 Seem with great solemn organ-tones to fill.

May, 1872.

TO R. BROWNING.

TRUE-HEARTED seer, whose keen and steady
eye,

Keeping a view point on an eminence
That reacheth Aither o'er the world of sense,
Doth, as from prophet's watch-tower, thence descry
Proportions of the things of earth and sky,—
Tell us thy vision when *our* sight is bound
Where little swellings of the lower ground
Seem our life's only truths because they lie
Betwixt the soul and things whereof it saith
'This I *believe*,' (which meaneth, "this I let
Please vacant fancy on one day in seven.")
Strengthen thy brethren by thy strength of faith,
And teach our human love in trust to set
Its continuity 'twixt Earth and Heaven.

August, 1872.

BROWNING AND SHELLEY.

STRONG poet soul, thou yearnest to thy friend
 That other poet soul elect by thee
 For worship, in that deep affinity
 Wherein two human natures seek to blend,
 And set their opposite forces to one end.
 It had been surely good for earth if he,
 While dwelling in that flesh thou ne'er didst see,
 Had in his need had help thy strength could lend,
 (Help better far than that wild deaf "west wind"
 Whereto in agony went out his cry
 That meant a seeking for his God unknown—)
 Good will it be for heaven when thou shalt find
 Thy Shelley there,—and two souls, drawing nigh,
 Perfect together things each wrought alone.

August, 1872.

FEAR.

AN EXPERIENCE ON THE WESTERN COAST OF SCOTLAND.

THEY lay there underneath the noonday sky,
 The shining islands on the shining sea.

They had lain there as beautiful ere we,
 Passing, beheld them, and they still would lie
 In brightness there when we had long passed by.
 And when I felt their gleaming, suddenly
 A spell of nameless terror compassed me
 With closer coils than midnight fear. Then I
 Sought with strained eyes for some minutest spot
Unbeautiful, that there my human soul
 Might break the mystic bindings of that sight.
 But, finding nowhere where that light was not,
 The self of me seemed pressed within a whole
 Of mindless beauty—and it perished quite.

WHAT THE HEATHER SAID.

THE heather looked at me : it looked and smiled :

I know its soul saw mine, there on the green
And purple mountain slopes. What did it mean

When with a gaze as innocently wild

As the glad open countenance of a child

It met my human eyes? First spoke to me

A quivering light of tender mockery

From the hill's face : " Ha, traitor, you beguiled

The heather's soul to give its best in vain !

It gave you its own joy—free, strong, pure-hued.

Why bring you not due payment back again

To it of fair fresh verse ?" Then, changing mood,

It said, " O man, gifts worthier than all art

You bring to-day, large silence from your heart."

August, 1872.

“THE NIGHT COMETH WHEREIN NO MAN
CAN WORK.”

LET not our human immortality
Be a perpetual vision in our sight ;
Lest we, too soon beholding infinite
Spaces of time our own, grow idly free
From urgency to completing aught,—lest we,
Viewing our life stretched beyond bounds of earth,
Deem it of small account if time 'twixt birth
Of each man and his death, should only be
A school-time for his soul, (no earthly deeds'
Achievement being end whereto had served
Soul's schooling). Show us only in some needs
The light eternal ; let our wills be nerved
Hourly to strenuous toil by sense that all
Work of life's day must close ere death's night fall.

July, 1872.

PERSONALITY.

SHE is a little child whose life hath known
 Only the gladdening play of nine sweet years.
 Why did there rise those vague and shuddering
 fears

In her young soul—that bright soul of her own
 Which in the sunshine of home love had grown
 From baby-hood? Because the mystery
 That girdeth round all personality,
 And setteth each man utterly alone,
 Came to her then. She said “I am an *I*.”
 Why am I *I*?” “I wish it was not so.”
 Why are *I*'s in the world?” That self same speech
 Rising from myriad hearts, is one great cry,
To what? ay, whither doth that utterance go?
 Doth it the Void, . . . or answering I Soul reach?

A QUESTION.

WHAT is for man the ultimate use and worth
 Of that sweet herbage he calls poetry,
 Which, ever deepening, spreadeth wide and free
 Throughout the grounds of habitable earth,
 Primeval, and yet daily new in birth,
 Whose roots of life must darkly hidden be
 Far down from sight of his philosophy?
 —Is this but pasture for his heart in dearth
 Of human nature's daily needful food
 Of joy? all the rich growth of rhythm and rhyme
 And beauty's imagery, . . . just a deep
 Lush clover meadow, where in oxlike mood
 Souls, starved elsewhere, may, for a little time,
 Feed on delight, till, satiate, they sleep.

A SEQUENCE OF SONNETS.

I.

WHAT shall we take as comfort for the pain
 Felt by our human spirits when they view
 The little done of all they dreamed to do;
 The impulses that ever urge in vain
 Large longings met by incommensurate gain,
 And dull decay of ardour to pursue
 Ideal hopes that prove themselves untrue?
 —Is *this* the comfort we may then attain,
 Calmly to see the utter littleness
 Of all within the individual soul,
 And merge our restless care for our own lot
 In a deep faith that in the large success
 And grand sure tendings of the human whole,
 Failure and loss of *one* life matters not.

II.

BUT is there consciousness within that whole?
And will the thing we call Humanity
Know of our love or care at all that we
For its great sake our murmuring thoughts control;
Finding a joy in its joy to console
Our selfish griefs? Or may it only be
We give our yearnings to a mockery,
A bare abstraction that outside each soul
Exists not? When beneath the surface show
We seek to reach some ultimate certitude
Nought else but this one substant truth we find
“*Thought is,*” (of knowledge this our one $\pi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omega$)
Nor with this primal essence find endued
Aught manifest except as personal mind.

III.

WE could unlearn desire for happiness,
If in some way our own loss were a gain
To some existence that might still remain
Nor perish out in ultimate aimlessness.
We could rejoice to feel that we had less
That it might have the more—that so our pain
Were *sacrifice*, and therefore not in vain ;
Could gladly die for some one lastingness.
—But what is this thing that it hath a claim ?
For if *each* man be only made for nought,
Of what account is all Humanity ?
What value can there be in the mere name
By which the image to our minds is brought
Of myriad worthless things' totality ?

IV.

O THOU abiding Personality,
(If that old creed which says thou art, be right),
Only in Thy light shall our hearts see light
To read a little of the mystery
That holdeth us and all the things that be.
O Love of God we ask Thee for a sight
Of Thee Thyself,—we need not the delight
Of promised joys throughout Eternity.
If we can only find some stable thing
Existent on throughout the ceaseless flow
Of Being passing into Nothingness—
Some one substantial Good to which to bring
Our love, we can our selfish hopes forego,
In trust *our* failure may be *its* success.

V.

IT is enough if we can find out Thee,
And know our work and we are Thine, O Lord.
Do thou with us according to Thy word—
Our lips spake truly when they said that we
Beholding Thee, could gladly cease to be,
And let *our* work fail; if this faith were sure
That Thy work would for evermore endure,
Could well forget *our* instability.
Do Thou with us according to Thy word—
Yet what that word of Thine? not death but life
Thou givest—*death* for Thee were all we need—
Yet not to death Thou call'st us—we have heard
A voice that bids us rise to joyous strife
To labour, sure that our true selves succeed.

February, 1872.

“ I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF
THE BODY.”

HOW if the body, emptied of the breath
Of vital force that while it therein dwelt
Kept it coherent, in corruption melt
Slowly from semblance left unharmed by death,
By law which human atoms scattereth
Forth through the soil or air to be anew
Made parts of lives—how shall these words be true
Which, over graves of human love, faith saith,
“ *That this, the thing committed to the earth
Shall, risen, live with soul*”? Yea, though earth’s wind
Disperse man’s show of matter, this may be ;
Form may return to its own world of birth.
There, with Real Essences the soul may find
Substance of old corporeal entity.

August, 1872.

XX

REST.

I.

WHEN there have been within a human heart
Wrestlings with doubt or sin ;
When Thou has granted to its better part
Strength, a great strength to win ;

II.

Keep Thou that heart at rest a little while,
By Thy near grace subdued ;
In Thy felt love, as in a mother's smile,
Let it find certitude.

III.

Healer ! it needeth tending from Thee now,
Limbs ache, and wounds are deep ;
Set Thy great kiss upon the throbbing brow ;
Soothe thought to quiet sleep.

IV.

Souls that to live by their own strength had tried
Are by Thy love brought low,
Feeling their weakness, emptied of their pride,
By Thee who all dost know.

V.

Yet let them not too long a space abide
In that strange peace of Thine ;
Break their repose, and send them from Thy side
Filled with new strength divine.

VI.

Father, Great Mother, to Thy love they yearn,
Meekly would stay with Thee ;
Yet must Thou bid them to the world return,
Thy witnesses to be.

VII.

Souls that through joy or grief some blest new birth
Into Thy kingdom gain ;
Growing, as children in the life of earth,
Full manhood must attain.

VIII.

Bid them go forth from out Thy home of grace,
Tender Thou art, yet stern ;
Choose Thou in Thy great outer world their place
Till Thy large truth they learn.

June, 1872.

EARTH'S USELESS PLACES.

H^E knoweth peace who to some mountain
height

Hath climbed, and in the stillness waiteth there,
To rest awhile tired limbs and panting breath,
And brain sun-fevered in the steep ascent.

—He lieth in the purple fragrant heath,

And feels so near to the great hollow sky,

That cireleth over, round and under him ;

Yet hath no fear of it ; it is not like

The sky that from the plains seems oftentimes

A brazen surface, hard, flat, beautiful.

He lets the pure stern wind sweep over him,

Wind the life-giver, breathed forth from God.

—Peace of the mountains is not like the peace

Wherewith the sad sea-murmurs fill the mind,

A strange sweet lethargy, wherein the will

That struggled yields itself at last to fate,
And wild desires for knowledge sink to sleep—
Yet sleep unresting, hearing restless waves.
—There is strong calmness in the mountain mood ;
No outer sound o'ermasters there the mind
With influences irresistible,
As doth the soft voice of the inhuman sea.
Man feels among the hills enduringness,
His own enduringness not less but more—
Bounded by boundless sky his will seems free
Although the ocean's vastness crushed it in.

Surely it is most good for us to be
Sometimes at rest upon these grounds which earth
Keepeth apart above her cultured fields
Sanctified to the use of uselessness,
(If usefulness mean clothing, house, or food,
To satisfy the needs of human brutes).
In uselessness the hills are consecrate,
Themselves the consecrators of all earth,
Revealers of her lowly common truths.

They manifest the glory of her plains.
For from the heights alone the eye can see
The level land in true proportion spread,
And judge what tracts of it be large, what small ;
And trace the windings of the streams and roads,
And the fair colours of the low extent
Of fields of pasture, corn and meadow land ;
Those very fields that seem so commonplace
When we have sight of them and them alone.

.

He who at any time hath known the joy
Of resting thus within the mountain's calm,
Will sometimes, after, on the common roads,
If his glance meet with, unexpectedly,
A pine tree, larch, or even one bright bush
Of furze in blossom, or some bracken fern,
Or any thing that serves to link his thought
To the far beauty of the holy heights,
Feel a deep sudden thrill shoot through his sense ;
As if an entrance to a real world
Again were broken from a world of dreams

And with a shock of change he passed therein.

.

Truly I know not how this is, nor why.

Yet am I sure the mountain peace is good

.

And there are mountain lands in some men's lives.

June, 1872.

“THE MOUNT THAT IS CALLED OLIVET.”

I.

WHY stand ye gazing, men of Galilee,
 Into the deep sky arching overhead,
 As though ye waited there some proof to see
 That there was truth in words the Master said?

II.

Hath He not spoken “I will come again,”
 And “Where I am, there shall ye also be”?
 Need ye some vision to make this more plain?
 Must ye have sight to give faith certainty?

III.

Rather go back to your Jerusalem,
 Unto what work ye find before you set,
 These things are safe, with all the love of them;
 Need ye delay upon Mount Olivet?

IV.

Why stand ye gazing, men of Galilee,
Ye who have watched God's cloud from sight receive
Blessings of earth? Yea, though most good they be.
Better it is if *thus* ye see them leave.

V.

Have ye not faith in all the words ye said?
Why need ye linger here to test your creed?
Doubt ye at all the "rising of the dead"—
Or that its First-fruits Christ, is risen indeed?

VI.

Unto your life's Jerusalem return
Gladly, for if ye take "great joy" with you,
Joy of a confidence most calm and stern,
Old ways and common will seem high and new.

June, 1872.

I.

THERE urged me a vacant longing :

I came to the jubilant sea :
To watch how its white waves were thronging
Round the rocks tumultuously.

II.

Within *me* there had been no motion
Of joy or of sorrow that day ;
A rainbow-light over the ocean
Was chasing the driving spray.

III.

And in impulse of strong young madness
Sea shouted its laugh to the sun :
Then I yearned towards its mighty gladness,
To be with that great life, one.

IV.

But its joy and my dull vague sorrow
Divided remained that day ;
They were *two* for many a morrow,
Till desire almost died away.

V.

When suddenly (was I waking?
Or was it an inland dream ?)
Somewhere the waves were breaking,
From their foamed crests flashed a gleam.

VI.

And somehow no longer divided
Was I from the joy of the sea :
Do I know if *my* life was tided
Into *its* life ? or its into me ?

VII.

Can I tell if this strange new seeming—
This flooding of glad surprise,
Will vanish, like joys of dreaming,
From the vision of waking eyes ?

VIII.

I know not ; but waves are rushing ;

Wind-driven spray to the sun

Answers, in rainbow hues flushing ;

And I and that ocean are one.

June, 1872.

TO C. D. R.

I.

YOU tell me the mists of the morning will
close o'er the sky again,
That the clouds will thicken and darken, dropping
their chilling rain.

II.

Long had the mists of the morning hidden the
infinite blue,
Grey was the vapour, yet sometimes, flushed with
faint reddening hue.

III.

Hours passed, and then near the noonday, woke
there a breeze in the air,
Breaking the mists, and they vanished, leaving the
heavens' truth bare.

IV.

Then

~~And~~ the great depth like an ocean, meeting all
things with its tide,

Looked into eyes that looked upward, and they
were satisfied.

V.

Now if old mists gather, stealing, up through the
air once more—

And the shrouded sky look leaden, just as it looked
before ;

VI.

abides
Still safe and supreme that one vision ~~will be~~
which our noon-tide knew

No gloom of the afternoon, closing, could make its
brightness untrue.

VII.

And may not the wind in the evening freshen again,
and the light

Of a great deep sunset glory, stream through rent
clouds on our sight.

June, 1872.

I.

POET whose own soul
Knoweth of no goal
Whither it and its wild hopes are tending ;
Floating as amid
Seas whose shores are hid,
Or down river without source or ending.

II.

Surely thou may'st well
Of thine own heart tell,
Of its fulness or its restless longing ;
Nothing hast thou known
But this truth alone,
That within thyself vague thoughts are thronging.

III.

All outside must seem
Like a deep soft dream,
Thine own life and all men's lives enclasping.

Let thy song's words catch
With convulsive snatch
Any substance that will meet their grasping.

IV.

Tell thy mood's employ,
Whether grief or joy,
Tenderly bedeck thy own emotion.
Utter all its tale,
With a laugh or wail,
Infant-like to deaf old mother ocean.

V.

Larger theme for art
Poet, choose, whose heart
Outside self hath found secure abiding ;
For thy fellows' needs
Chant thou forth as creeds
Fair truths rescued from their wonted hiding.

VI.

In the great wide earth
There is more of worth
For thy song than one man's pain or pleasure :

Underneath the sun
 There have deeds been done
 Fitter far to be high verse's treasure.

VII.

Bind the world's great Past
 To its Present, fast,
 Let the strong men, dead, join strong men living ;
 Let thy earnest speech
 To earth's Future reach :
 Minds unborn may take what thine is giving.

VIII.

No man can forget
 Things that deep are set
 In the life that his is and none other's ;
 Yet these should but serve
 Heart and brain to nerve
 For glad helpful work for men his brothers.

June, 1872.

“AND THE SEA RETURNED UNTO HIS STRENGTH
WHEN THE MORNING APPEARED.”

(Exodus, xiv. 27.)

I.

NOW let the sea come closing
Once more over the place ;
Let its fair surface, reposing,
Wear an unseaméd face.

II.

Wind—God’s spirit, came sweeping
Rolling Time’s waters aside,
One narrow pathway keeping
Dry ’mid their mighty tide.

III.

Now let the world’s waves cover
Safely again that track :
Truths of the soul have passed over,
Nothing can bring them back.

May, 1872.

PROGRESSION.

I.

G LADLY they let the dream from out their
lives depart :

Henceforth they need it not—its perfect work is
wrought.

It was the *παιδαγωγός* whereby souls were brought
Into the great earth-school where heart doth learn
from heart.

II.

And that school's entrance, found, needs nevermore
be sought :

What though in seeking it with wistful life's desire,
There was a strange high joy. They enter into
higher

Joy, who pass in where Love's abiding truths are
taught.

III.

In lessons rising through the changing earthly
years ;

Reaching through faith. through knowledge, through
self-retinence .

Deep patience, true fraternity, till, lastly, thence
Unto the deathless *ἀγάπη* each spirit nears.

I.

REST—nor send back a wish
To the glow of sunshine that lay
Steeping the rippled sea,
And the bright cliffs yesterday.

II.

Rest—nor send forth a fear
To the morrow's storm or its rain,
Stir not a thought to guess
What presage those clouds contain,

III.

Edging the far horizon
With a long low dark streak.
Wait till the Future cometh
Vex not thy mood to seek.

IV.

Surely it is enough
In the infinite Present to be,
Yea to be closed therein
From thy hope and thy memory.

V.

Closed in the circling good
Of the stillness that is spread,
All through the monotone
Of the grey-blue sky over-head.

VI.

All through the monotone
Of the grey-blue sea beneath,
All through the monotone
Of the solemn sunless heath.

VII.

From the dark purple heath
Gone is the life-light of red :
Beautiful is it still ;
Calm, like a face that is dead.

VIII.

This is a "truce of God"
For the earth and the sky and the sea;
A day that *is*, 'twixt the days
That *were* and the days that *will be*.

IX.

Deep is earth's calm to-day
Unbroken by sun or by wind,
Rest therein and respond
With the joyless calm of a mind.

August, 1872.

THE RIVER AND THE TIDE.

I.

COMETH joy—but joy must, like the sea,
Ebb and flow :

What doth keep man's heart abidingly
When the tide is low ?

II.

Inland gusheth from the mountain side
Love's fresh rill ;
Flows to where the risings of joy's tide
Come the stream to fill.

III.

Gladly takes the river from the sea
That great gift ;
Lets the tide-waves, flooding mightily,
Its own waves uplift.

IV.

With a rush and swell the waters run
Till they seem
As were thus for ever mixed in one,
Floods of sea and stream.

• V.

Sinks the tide, and back to whence it came
Ebbing goes.
Yet the river onward with the same
Impulse ever flows.

VI.

It can let the sea-waves come and go
As they will ;
For a source that has no tidal flow
Feeds its current still.

• VII.

Out of Life's hard rock that spring hath birth,
None knows why ;
And can, flowing, keep that place of earth,
Joy's ebbs would leave dry.

September, 1872.

A RETROSPECT.

I.

THEN was it, after all, mere human dreaming,—
 Fancies thrown outward by an o'erwrought
 brain,
 Fevered with minglings of strong joy and pain ?
 Did not the heaven unclose, and Truth forth stream-
 ing,
 Like Pentecostal fire, or dovelike wings,
 Bear to us God's free gifts of holy things ?

II.

What did our hearts behold ?—Earth's light seemed
 blended
 With the pure light of Light invisible,
 In one great radiance that waxed to fill
 Us and all space with love ; and doubt was ended ;
 And our dim faith was lost in blessed sight ;
 Merged in clear hope of life the infinite.

III.

Must our eyes, opening now in sober waking,
Find that the world is as it was before ;
Feel its old darkness pressing evermore.
Darkness of That which still no answer making
To sad men's questionings of "what" and "why"—
Doth o'er the chaos of our being lie ?

IV.

Or are we dreaming *now* ? and was that vision
Something that through long-trancéd senses broke.
And in each spirit its Pure-Reason woke,
Teaching 'twixt true and false to make decision ?
—Ah!—who can tell us what these things may
mean ?
We only know that joy in us hath been.

V.

Know we *indeed* this ? then through years remain-
ing,
Now since a light hath shinéd once, although,

Waning, that glory fled ere we could know
Its source, our souls can cease from their vague
 straining,
Their wail of "who will show us any good?"
We can accept all things not understood.

VI.

For, whether dream or truth, Joy's touch brought
 healing,
Strengthening faint hearts with utmost fate to cope,
Giving stern vigour that needs neither hope
Nor faith, but waiteth till God's great revealing
End with a deeper joy our life-long test—
Or till Death's answer come—the dreamless rest.

March, 1873.

I.

I DID not care to write to you,
 My Friend, this many a day—
 Why? just because two whole weeks through,
 Upon the hills—upon the bay,
 Beneath the sky's September blue,
 The tender brooding sunshine lay
 From morn till eve. I think you knew
 All I could wish to say.

II.

Was not all well with us while each
 Day met the same bright sea
 That swelled or rippled up the beach?
 I let the golden moments be :
 What need had we for words to reach
 From me to you, from you to me?
 Is not this silence fittest speech
 For best reality?

III.

What could my letters give you ? Nought

But just the same old aid—

A few poor seraps of broken thought

(Perchance in some new phrase arrayed),

A little learned, a little taught,

In idle game so often played,

Searchings of matters vainly sought,

Vexed questions re-essayed.

IV.

Or trivial household gossipings

Of who has come, who gone,

Whence, whither,—little gatherings

From what was said and what was done,

And talk of sequences chance brings

From day to day. You needed none

Of matters such-like. Larger things

Are here ! the sun hath shone !

V.

And shineth on—a fair wide pall

Of light essential, lent

From upper air serene, doth fall,
 Seeming in infinite content
 To fold our lives phenomenal,
 And merge each little accident—
 Earth's Many lies within this All
 In glad abandonment.

VI.

Let us be silent ! lest we break
 This peace, not knowing whence
 It came. We can but let it make
 Life large awhile. The hush intense
 Of the great present calm doth take
 A pathos from our half-felt sense
 That the old winds and waves will wake,
 This radiance vanish hence.

September, 1875.

IN SEPTEMBER.

I.

WAS it but yesterday, or long ago ;
 That mystic autumn day ? Time's gliding
 flow

Is hard to mark and mete ; we cannot know,
 Nought else beholding, whether swift or slow

Its movement is the while it onward tends.

II.

Again the lucid deep September haze
 Trembles in morning hours : around me plays
 (Intangible as half-felt dream that weighs
 In coming sleep), the memory of a blaze

That somewhere on a far off hill-side blends

III.

Its purple reds with flakes of green and gold
 From a deep furze and heather sea, out rolled

In radiant calm amid soft mists that fold
Its limits round, aglow as if no cold
Or darkness ever had been, nor could be.

IV.

I shut my eyes; and as I feel the flame
Of sunshine, red, through closéd lids—the same
Strange light which on that morning somehow
came
(From soul or sense, I know not, nor its name,)
Streams in unbroken continuity.

V.

Till time and space seem words as idle air,
For all the Now seems Then, and Here seems There,
And I am loath to stir a thought, nor care
To question whether months and years it were
Since then—or but one slumbrous moment's lapse.

VI.

One moment?—or long years? I cannot say—
What matters it how seasons mark their way.

Perhaps 'twas thrice since that September day
The autumn-gorse and mingled heather lay
Fresh-blossomed on the fields—perhaps—

VII.

Nay I will wake—nor let the spell of this
Sweet trance enfold me longer ; lest the kiss
Of one vague hour's remembrance make me miss,
In lulled delight, the stern essential bliss
Of the things manifold that intervene.

VIII.

I may not lose the years whose months, days, hours,
Have passed since then. (Earth beareth other flowers
And herbs for beauty, food, and wholesome powers,
That bloom when heather fades.) In souls of ours
A growth of other varied joys hath been.

IX.

Of larger worth than that one mystic mood
Of dreamy brightness of incertitude—
It passed away. Came there not firmer good
Through sense of true things seen and understood,
Well measured out in all their loss and gain?

X.

Came there not, after, a great Eastertide,
 When the young gladness born on that hill-side
 Was piercéd through by sharp hard truth, and died,
 Then rose again, to strong life glorified,
 Made wise and pure ^{through} victory over pain? ,

XI.

Come there not now, although *that* ecstacy
 Was transient likewise, gracious years when we
 May find our portion 'mid the things that be
 No loans from joy, but perpetuity
 Of fair sad happiness, grave equal faith?

XII.

In surest comradeship of heart and mind,
 That needs not memory's sweetnesss to bind
 Its constancies—enough one tie to find—
 Brave human help exchanged, to face with blind
 Stern hopefulness all mysteries of death.

September, 1875.

SONNET.

MY verses' worth and worthlessness I know.
 Haply while on the beach there lie amassed
 Brown tangled wrack and drift-wood, lately cast
 Further than wont by wind and tidal flow
 Up from the sea (that sea which still with slow
 And lulled strength endureth, guarding fast
 The coast's low-water mark), you may have passed,
 Upon the sands, strewn clots of foam. They show
 How high erewhile the ocean's surge hath come,
 Which, ebbing, leaveth symbols to attest
 Its upper reach, else doubted. Import more
 Lies in the dwindled morsels of sea-scum
 Than their own worth—each signifies a crest
 Which some deep-breasted wave here jubilant bore.

November, 1875.

V E R S E S.

PART II.

C. D. M.



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PEGASUS.

I.

WHAT is my Pegasus? A fiery horse
Bearing the rider in its curbless course
He reck's not where — by swift-winged fancy's
force?

II.

Nay mine (I love him, he my needs doth suit
The better) is a wingless, slow-paced brute,
Patient, stout-built, in temper resolute.

III.

A steed that never may through Ether dart ;
He serves me well enough to draw my cart,
Laden with moods and thoughts from brain and
heart.

IV.

He drew my loads in years long, long ago ;
Yet now no sign of age the beast doth show :
Perhaps by use his muscles stronger grow.

V.

Gee ho ! good ass of mine ! The roads are rough—
A few years longer pull your master's stuff :
For him and you the grave has rest enough !

1882.

SONNET.

IF suddenly the darkness closed, while light
 Present to sense at height of fulness lay,
 No need were there for hope that dawn of day
 Would break anew ; for, came it so, the Night
 Would seem to give Noon's sweetness infinite
 And timeless being ; and, lest twilight's grey
 Might touch the sunshine with a chill decay,
 Enfold it safe. Ah ! *if* Death's dark aright
 Would fall on us in earthly life (like veil
 On Moses' face while still irradiate
 With God-lit glory), in our hour supreme
 Of joy or ardour, ere its glow in pale,
 Slow wanings sink : then were men's souls good fate
 Complete without the Resurrection Dream.

FIRST CONVERSION.

(OR ANYTHING SIMILAR THERETO.)

I.

THEY sang a song of exultation,
 When joy that worketh strong salvation
 Rushed, like the wind of God—and cleft
 Earth's level sea of commonplace,
 And parted it, to right, to left—
 Leaving between a sacred space.

A moment's pathway for the pilgrim band
 Of hopes that sought the Resurrection land.

II.

Too soon they sang that strain victorious,
 Not counting how the Country glorious
 Lay far—beyond Life's wilderness.
 They saw not the long stretch of years,

Not blank, but filled with new access

Each day, of pleasures, toils, or fears.

They knew not—Ah!—that ere their love
should gain

Its goal, the wish that made it Faith would
wane.

1881.

DIRGE.

(SUGGESTED BY CHOPIN'S FUNERAL MARCH.)

DIG her grave, and lay her deep :
Let the clay her beauty cover,
Hiding her from friend and lover ;
All her sweetness, all her mirth
Now for evermore is over.
Sleepeth she the dreamless sleep.
Dust to dust, and earth to earth !
Vain is weeping ; yet men weep.

Ah, the beauty of the sunlit world !

Ah, the greenness of Spring's leaves unfurled !

Ah, the birds' song, and their swift wings' motion !

Ah, the laughter of the rippled ocean !

Ah, the winds with scent of hawthorn laden !

Ah, the strength and grace of youth and maiden !

Ah, man's desire of life, so deep, so vain ;

He goeth hence, and cometh not again.

Yet, her life had richest joy ;

Her's it was while it she tasted.

Death perchance hath kindly hasted

To the maiden, ere the years

Vigour of her life had wasted,

Dimming it with pain's alloy.

Therefore triumph with our tears

Mingle. Death doth death destroy !

Never shall her beauty know decay !

Never fade to twilight's cold her day !

Life for her within its bliss is rounded ;

Knoweth *she* that death that bliss hath bounded ?

We, the living, praise the Dead, whose spirit

Doth the lot of God's most loved inherit :

We, too, that *our* best joy might never wane,

Would die with her, and count life's loss a gain.

Triumph we for her! yet weep;
Weep because the grave must cover,
Hidden from her friend and lover,
All her sweetness and her mirth.
All is ended! all is over!
Bear her gently, lay her deep.
Dust in dust, and earth in earth!
Let her sleep her dreamless sleep!

April, 1880.

The feeling about death in Chopin's "Marche Funèbre" seems to *me* to be essentially Pagan. To others the music may be suggestive of other moods, very possibly.

DIRGE.

(SUGGESTED BY THE FUNERAL MARCH IN BEETHOVEN'S
TWELFTH SONATA.)

I.

WHEN man's breath doth fail
Let no useless wail

With the mourners' funeral strain be blended.

Bear we on our Dead,

With firm, silent tread,

To the grave where all his hopes are ended.

II.

All things ebb and flow ;

Life must come and go.

Men must bow in sternest adoration

Of the mighty Fate

That unmoved doth wait

For their worship of Renunciation.

III.

Mortals though we be,
Yet may dignity
Be of man's frail being proud distinction :
Let it cloak us round
Till Earth's burial ground
Hide in Nature's life *our* life's extinction.

IV.

Bear we on our Dead ;
Leave vain words unsaid :
Silent honour is his best ovation.
He hath lived. His deeds
Shall not miss their meeds,
Though his own be but annihilation.

V.

Resteth he in peace ;
Pain with joy doth cease.
He sleeps well who sleeps to waken never.
We will evermore,
Though our hearts be sore,
Praise the Earth, whose glory liveth ever.

April, 1880.

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE FOREGOING
DIRGE.

I.

WHEN our joy doth fail,
Let no idle wail

With its requiem in our hearts be blended :

But with steadfast tread

Let us bear Hope, dead,

Onward to that grave where pain is ended.

II.

All things ebb and flow ;

Joy must come and go :

Let us bow in sternest adoration

Of the unmoved Fate

That doth round us wait

To receive our hearts' renunciation.

III.

Vanquished though we be,
Yet, let dignity
Be of human sadness' proud distinction ;
Let it cloak us round,
Till Earth's burial ground
Hide in Nature's joy *our* joy's extinction.

IV.

Bliss, if dead, is dead ;
Words were idle said ;
Sorrow's clamour brings not restoration :
Little profiteth
Human yearnings' breath
In the rigid corpse to wake sensation.

V.

Requiescat ! Peace
Comes when hope doth cease,
When some good hath been renounced for ever.
Men may evermore,
Though each heart be sore,
Feel *Man's* jubilation that faileth never.

April, 1880.

“OÙ SONT LES NEIGES D'ANTAN ?”

I.

SAY ye that as transient as the snow
 Human hearts' pure joy doth come and go ?
 Fall as Heaven's resistless grace,
 Rest unchanged for one brief space,
 Perfected upon earth's face :
 Vanish then, and leave no trace,
 Fading with a waning sure and slow,
 As the passing of the winter's snow ?

II.

Yea, but if *indeed* as winter's snow
 Joy hath come—I answer : Be it so.
 Fear not, lest of its dear grace
 Aught should perish from that place
 Where, transfiguring life's face,
 It hath shone one blessed space :
 All its essence *they* shall find, who know
 How to seek it, as they seek the snow.

III.

Seek ye the lost beauty of the snow ?
 Ye shall find it where the Spring's herbs grow
 Strong and tender on its place ;
 Find it wheresoe'er the race
 Of swift brooks hath o'er the face
 Of the green land borne its grace ;
 See in clouds above, or grass below,
 Transmutations of earth's vanished snow.

IV.

Find the substance of past joy e'en so :
 Living on in all the thoughts that grow
 Out of hearts where for a space
 Once it rested. Seek and trace
 In new deeds and words its grace,
 Keeping evermore that place
 Where, to eyes unheeding, it as snow,
 Dreamlike, only seemed to come and go.

April, 1881.

SONNET.

(S Y M P A T H Y .)

I WILL not question of your words to me ;
 I will not ask myself how much I heard :
 It is enough for me to know they stirred
 Some part of that great circumambient sea
 Wherein the speech of all Humanity
 Vibrates for evermore in waves of sound—
 Enough to *feel* that in the air around
 Unseen your utterance moveth ceaselessly.

 You need not hear the answer that went out
 When thought grew vocal, and with motion swift
 Passed from my soul. Enough ! I let it go,
 Where, in the same air-ocean rolled about,
 Your words and my words, somehow as they drift,
 May meet—though *we* who sent them, do not know.

SONNET.

(INTERCESSORY PRAYER.)

“ He shall purify the sons of Levi.”

DID ye with vigils, and with tears that fall
As drops of the heart's blood, the Lord im-
plore

To succour in some need your loved, and pour
On *their* souls light and peace, nor heed at all
Your own? God, hearkening to your prayer, may
call

Its truth to trial. From His blessings' store,
If He but grant the boon ye asked—*no more*—
Can ye rejoice? Ah! though to you befall
To see glad hands of others *give* that gift
Ye won from Heaven? . . . When human love's
desire

This test can bear, which parts from dross its gold,
Christ counts it worthy to *His* love to lift
True intercession. . . . Purified by fire
Are they who are among His priests enrolled.

August, 1881.

GOD'S MESSAGES.

(FROM THE GERMAN.)

I.

GOD sent a human soul as messenger
To mine,
When He would first a precious gift confer,
The wine
He blesseth — earthly love's glad draught, which
sent
Into the heart of Man, is sacrament
Of Heaven's love pledge and sign.

II.

God chose that self-same soul as messenger
Again,
When He on me would nobler gift confer,
Of pain—

A cup whose draught with some few drops is
 fraught
 Of the deep bitterness He drank who wrought
 For Man salvation's gain.

III.

And will God make that soul His messenger
 Once more ?
 Hath He a gift yet higher to confer
 In store
 For me ? Will Christ, unworthy though I be,
 Give me of *His* new wine of victory,
 Love's joy, whose pain is o'er ?

IV.

Amen. I would not that the Lord confer
 That joy
 On me—on him He may as messenger
 Employ—
 Too soon. Nay, let Him *first* by sterner grace
 Make pure our hearts ~~to see~~ *ere they behold* His face,
 Ere gladness pain destroy.

TO ROBERT BROWNING.

(ON RE-READING SOME POEMS LONG UNREAD.)

FRIEND, "strong since joyful"—guide upon
the heights

Of life's best blessedness and life's best pain,

Awhile I left thee ; now I come again,

Urged by thy vigour lent of old, which fights

Within my soul, and there makes good its rights

Over the sloths and languors of the plain.

Lead me ! I, if I follow thee, am sane

From sad, sick dreams and lotus flower delights,

That o'er the indolence of heart's despair

Shed charm of Art. Thy nobler Art doth cope

With doubts and ills ; and they who with thee
dare

Thought's strenuous climb on rugged mountain slope,

Find vision purged like thine, by that keen air,

To catch dear glimpses of a far-off hope.

August 30th, 1881.

DOWRIES.

(FROM THE GERMAN.)

I.

LET not woman empty-handed
 Go to hearth of whom she weds with.
 Let her bring him wealth to make her
 Welcomed to his life as equal,
 Not as beggar, whom for pity
 It should shelter, clothe, and nourish.
 Maiden, spin beside your mother
 By her cottage door in sunshine,
 By the fire in winter's evenings;
 Spin and weave much goodly raiment,
 Goodly store of household linen :
 Fit provision for the comfort
 Of his home whose heart elects you
 In that home to rule as mistress
 Of your own, your husband's substance
 Through the many years and happy.

II.

DAMSEL fair, in higher station,
Born to wealth that others toiled for ;
With a father's gold for portion :
You must also bring your bridegroom
Dowry wrought by your own spinning ;
Goodly stuff that hath been woven
By yourself in years of girlhood,
In the years before he loved you.
Bring him all their cherished fancies,
Bright, or grey with morning sadness ;
All the dreaming, all the thinking
Of a young, fresh brain (unwearied
By cold weight of custom's pressure) ;
All your school-taught arts and learnings ;
All your ardours for the larger
Knowledge life spreads out before you.

III.

WOMAN old, whom earth's strange chances
Parted here from friend your dearest ;
If, indeed, in God's Hereafter
Men may meet : then richer dowry
You may bring than if in bygone
Years your life with his were mingled,
In the freshness of its girlhood,
Ere love's work in it were finished.
Ampler store of goodly substance,
By a heart's experience woven ;
Beautiful with all the varied
Faith and gladness, doubt and sorrow,
Pathos of dear joys' renouncements,
Gains of tender force for pity :
All the things that love, enduring
Through the long years, wrought within you.

August, 1881.

“THERE SHALL BE NO MORE SEA.”

[Written after reading, at the sea-side, a volume of Roman Catholic Sermons, vividly depicting Hell.]

I.

“**T**HERE shall be no more Sea.” Ah! surely
this

Doth only mean for souls who reach the bliss
Of Paradise. *They* need no more the kiss
Of Earth's great mother Sea; *they* will not miss
Whose pulses with new-risen life beat high,
Soothings from this aeonian lullaby,
Which winneth now men's weariness to lie
Within its sound, and be content to die.

II.

Hearts, strong in vigour of their fresh great joy,
Shall need no leap of laughing waves to buoy

Them with an alien gladness, and destroy
A little while their human cares' annoy ;
And eyes, whereon the light of Heaven doth break,
Need nevermore pathetic pleasure take
In ocean gleams, whose beauty here can make
Dim lives worth living, if but for its sake.

III.

Yet, though the *Blessed* need no more the Sea,
Will not God leave her to the *Lost*? That she
Who could not save them from their woe, may be
Their nurse to comfort, ever tenderly
With vast low hushabies to still
The restlessness of pain incurable ;
And with a sense of vague, fair sadness fill
Their hunger for lost good adorable.

IV.

Men love her, Earth's old sea—she loves them well ;
If she may be their mother, too, in Hell,
Will she not rock them there with lulling swell
Of all her waters? Till (Ah, who can tell?)

Her constancy shall not have wrought in vain,
 And souls, who nevermore God's grace could gain,
 May to the peace of dreamless sleep attain—
 Lost to all gladness, lost alike to pain.

1881.

SONNET.

“ LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.”

AY, love them, Christian, since thou dost believe
That they who harmed thee could not
touch thine all,

Or put thy joy's dear life beyond recall.

Why shouldst *thou* grudge their finite gain? or
grieve?

Thy loss amends unmeasured shall receive.

Harder *his* task, upon whose heart doth fall

Some chill renunciation, as a pall

Final in its own blankness, which doth leave

No hope of clearer dawn, or gladder spring.

If *this* man love his brother who hath wrought

By luck or will his damage, he doth bring

A sacrifice, with rarer incense fraught

From Godless creed, to God (if God there be),

Than thine, in thy sweet, easy charity.

ACQUIESCENCE.

I.

THEY tell me that from one dear hill-side spot
The furze and heather hath been swept away,
And herbs for household use, in garden clay,
Grow trimly now within its cultured plot,
Where nevermore upon September day
Shall purpled gold respond to sunlight's ray.

II.

And do I wish it otherwise? Ah, no !
That blesséd acre's beauty was as bread
Of sacrament, whereby my heart was fed
One bye-gone morn. Unwistful I let go
The outer symbol, for the grace is fled
That sanctified the moorland's gold and red.

DOUBT.

YOU say that Doubt doth as a vapour chill
 Creep o'er the soul, and all its vigour kill,
 By Fear, that, numbing energies of will,
 Folds it with presence irresistible.

I tell you, Doubt can other semblance take :
 To me it seems, as sunbeam burst, to make
 In a grey sky of certitude a break
 Of gleam and glow that bid the heart awake.
 To you and me it cometh ; yet the same
 Which *you* call *Fear*, for *me* hath other name ;
 I call it *Hope*—the precious doubt that came
 With dove-winged darts, as Pentecostal flame—
 The blessed *chance* that not yet proven true
 Might be Renunciation's creed, whereto
 I lent sad faith ; its touch doth still endue
 Again ! again ! my soul with impulse new !

Methinketh that if *no* belief secure
In *certitude* may be, *we* hold most sure
Life's gladness (whence flows force), who thus inure
Our hearts to live by creed most sternly poor :
For thus, if daily wont that faith attain
Which needs not promised Heaven, then this dear
 gain
Is ours : that to our mood austerely sane
Doubt, when it cometh, bringeth joy, not pain.

September, 1882.

“CUI BONO?”

WITH a chance friend of mine I walked to-day
A mile or two. We talked along the way

Of many things—the weather, the concerns

Of folk we knew, until by devious turns

We found ourselves on graver matters' ground,

And there at variance. Words of her's around

A creed she “Christian” called, set narrow bound,

Essayed to measure out by petty rule

Of some small shibboleth of her own school,

The heights, and breadths, and depths of Heaven

and earth,

The grace of God, and human actions' worth.

(I fancy her own life could speak in *deeds*

Language of larger doctrine than her creeds' !)

I might have waived reply with courteous guile,

Or given response of many-meaninged smile ;

But somehow then a passing impulse stirred
Desire in me to demonstrate absurd
The logic of the cant's plain import (bare
From texts that wrapped it from life's open air).

Her doctrine reckoned for the sole elect
To grace of Heaven, a blessed phrase-bound sect.
I took for mine, what liker seemed to me
Christ's Gospel, not some devil's parody.
How God in all His earth were source of good,
Whence floweth every noble act or mood
Of souls that know Him, or that know Him not :
Who leaves uncared by love no human lot :
Who freely gifts of grace divine hath laid
In gift of life, on all the hearts he made ;
Who sees with mercy's justice infinite
The utmost, inmost of our wrong and right.

(I write some few of many things I said :
You guess, of course, the track discourse was led.)
With need to utter thoughts, my thoughts grew
clear ;

And my belief in them awhile sincere ;
A flash of faith struck from my heart cast out
That heart's own haunting presences of doubt.

Our contest ended soon. I had the best
Of it, I fancied ; and we both sought rest
In change of theme. But when the little heat
Of speech was past, I felt as if defeat
Or victory had been worth about the same
To me. A swift collapse of interest came
Across my mood—the feeling “ need I care
To win in strife so idle ? What if fair
Appear *this* creed, while *that* repulsive seems ;
Matters it much, when both alike are dreams ?
What profits it (except for bare delight
In jousts of words,) in shadows' cause to fight ? ”

October, 1881.

POPPIES.

(AN IDYL FRAGMENT.)

I.

A TROTH they plighted on that August day,
When chance had bid them meet upon the
way

That goes hard by the wind-swept corn fields, down
From the fresh moorland towards the fishing town.

II.

Encompassed them the sea and the deep sky
As witnesses. Within them seemed to lie
A love like sea and sky—in certitude,
To last through every varying light and mood.

III.

Alack! What evil Fate this omen planned,
That she that hour should hold in heedless hand

The way-side flowers she plucked her gown to
dress—

Poppies, the symbol of forgetfulness?

IV.

The flower that to men's joy or pain brings sleep,
Lay in the hands that then in vow to keep
The hearts' clasp whole and true eternally,
Were clasped in presence of God's sky and sea.

V.

The years went by. No hour of parting set
Its breach between their lives, and they are yet
Each the same man or woman, with the gain
Of strength matured by use of heart or brain.

VI.

But when they meet and talk—a half-felt sense
Is in their eyes, of some deep difference
(Some change more truly felt, because untold),
'Twixt what is now, and what was once of old.

VII.

And why? Ah, from the poppies' touch then laid
On the fair purposed promise that they made,
(Beside those corn-fields reaped long years ago,)
Some potent bale that morn did haply flow,

VIII.

Which with its working slow and sure doth creep
Into the soul, and dull its love to sleep,
Leaving all other forces in it free
From subtle influence of the lethargy.

IX.

Who knows if t'was the poppies harmed their lot?
She only knows that *him* she blameth not.
And yet, and yet, the wish *will* come that luck
Had not, ill-omened, bid her stoop and pluck
Those scarlet blossoms, glowing by the way
Just ere they met, that old bright August day.

THE RIVER OF TIME.

(WRITTEN AT THE AGE OF FOURTEEN.)

I.

I DREAMED a dream; 'twas a half waking
dream :

This is my dream : I stood upon the shore
Of a great river, whose strong waves did seem
To roll on ceaselessly for evermore.

II.

I looked. Upon its current strong afloat
Were many vessels, hurrying toward the sea ;
One living soul there sat in each frail boat,
And they must onward go unceasingly.

III.

And yet methought that towards the river's shore
Some souls their eyes with lingering looks did
turn ;
But while they gazed the stream them onward bore,
And to that spot they never might return.

IV.

Then thought I, " what may that Great River be
Which ever beareth swift and sure along
Unto the great immeasurable sea,
Those vessels frail upon its current strong ?"

V.

Straightway I heard a voice sound in mine ears
That said: " That River rolling toward the sea
Is Time ; and all its ceaseless waves are years
That bear men onward toward Eternity."

ART AND POPULARITY.

TO R. BROWNING.

[“ No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new,
for he saith the old is better.”]

HAPLY thy life were harmed if earth her fame
Had proffered ere years proved thou
didst not need

Drink of applause Arts' daily force to feed ;
Ere the Ποιητης—God—deep source whence came
Thy poet's impulse, bade thee *first* to claim
Reward like to His own—true artists' meed
Of joy that flows in essence of the deed,
Unreached by accident of laud or blame.

But now, since thou through long uncrowned days
Didst draw soul's strength from draughts of
that old wine

Of gladness, which doth evermore sustain

All Nature's working, human or divine :

No fear for thee, lest thou that first good gain

Shouldst quit, to thirst for *new* wine of men's praise.

1882.

ART AND POPULARITY.

(A COUNTERPART TRUTH TO THE FOREGOING.)

S AID I thou didst not need to feed thy Art
 From daily draughts of wine of human
 praise,

While God sustained thee in unlauded days
 With Earth's old gladness, which makes vigour dart
 Through the soul's pulses? Ay, but yet my heart
 Saith that this thought of thee is but a phase
 Of truth concerning thee; and on me lays
 Urgence to speak the half truth's counterpart.

For thou *hadst* need of us. Pure artists' joy
 Could not suffice thy soul's whole thirst to
 slake.

Tasted alone, God's precious wine would cloy.
 Thy manhood needed *men*, thy gains to share.

Thy brethren's sympathy, not praise, can make
 Thy life complete that else imperfect were.

FROM THE GERMAN OF JOHANN SALIS
SEEWIS.

[On the thirtieth anniversary of his mother's death.]

MOTHER, my mother here, and mother *there*,
There where Death is not, where no
tears shall flow,

I am thy son ; this head, with its gray hair,
Is thine own child's thou leftst so long ago.

Life's evening falls ; and, through the darkening air,
Star-like the long-lost angel faces show.

Thine bids me come—my mortal flesh to share
Thy tomb—my soul, through thine, new birth
to know.

Once, born to earth, upon thy arm I lay,

Whilst thou in pain and bliss didst bend o'er
me,

The smile of hope and love no tongue can say.

So, when I, issuing from Death's dark, shall see

First the effulgence of Heaven's perfect day,

Let me again awhile thy baby be.

1881.

ADRIFT.

I.

U NTO my Faith, as to a spar, I bind
My Love—and Faith and Love adrift I
cast

On a dim sea. I know not if at last
They the eternal shore of God shall find.

II.

I only know that neither waves nor wind
Can sunder them ; the cords are tied so fast
That Faith shall never—doubts and dangers
past—

Come safe to land, and Love be left behind.

APOLOGIA.

(TO S. L. T.)

I.

IS there the “Rising from the Dead”—then we,
 Careless through faith, may bury utterly,
 Dear things that die—desires that may not be.

II.

There is no need to raise upon the plot
 Wherein they rest, a stone to mark the spot :
 Its place may be by all the world forgot :

III.

And over it green grass or corn may grow ;
 Or feet of busy men pass to and fro—
 Of men who ask not what there lies below.

IV.

It is enough that *He* who gives Death's sleep
To joys belovéd—evermore doth keep
His record of where each lies buried deep.

V.

No shrine for their sweet *memory* need we make,
For they *themselves*, when Easter-morn shall break,
Shall hear His voice—and to new life awake.

VI.

But if for Man *one* life—*no more*—there be ;
Then lay we our lost blessings tenderly
In some fair sepulchre that eyes may see.

VII.

Since all must crumble to the common dust ;
One fate befall the just and the unjust :
To graven words of monument we trust

VIII.

To win for our best gladnesses the grace
Of life prolonged on sunlit earth a space,
Finding in minds of living men a place.

IX.

[And when this book's vague rhyming uttereth
Dear thoughts safe hid, if sure were earlier faith—
What means this but a heart's recoil from death?

X.

What means it but that Love, since *Heaven's* hopes
wane,
Takes as its portion Art's good lesser gain
On *Earth*—to prove itself not spent in vain?]

April 4th, 1883.





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